



OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

Mississippi Forestry Commission
660 North Street, Suite 300, Jackson, MS 39202

www.mfc.ms.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 3, 2011

Contact: Leslie G. "Opie" Blackwell
MFC Firewise Coordinator
(601) 540-3358
lblackwell@mfc.state.ms.us

Noxapater, Mississippi Earns National Recognition for Wildfire Preparedness

Noxapater, Mississippi -- Because of its efforts to reduce the vulnerability of homes and landscapes to wildfire, Noxapater, Mississippi has earned Firewise Communities/USA recognition from the National Firewise Communities Program.

Noxapater worked with the Mississippi Forestry Commission to conduct a wildfire hazard assessment and develop a plan to address safety concerns. Residents then worked together to implement the plan.

"Noxapater, Mississippi took a great leap forward in preparing for wildfires. The community is located in one of Mississippi's hottest counties and the community recognized this fact. I had great local cooperation on the Commission's portion of the project. Noxapater is on the national Firewise Communities map now and ready to move forward with wildfire protection", said Leslie Blackwell, Mississippi Forestry Commission Firewise Coordinator.

Noxapater, Mississippi is the fourth community in Mississippi to be recognized as Firewise Communities/USA, joining many other communities nationwide that have been recognized since the program's inception in 2002.

Fire-prone communities can work with local professionals to earn Firewise Communities/USA status by meeting the following criteria:

- Enlist a wildland/urban interface specialist to complete a community assessment and create a plan that identifies agreed-upon achievable solutions to be implemented by the community.
- Sponsor a local Firewise Task Force Committee, Commission or Department, which maintains the Firewise Communities/USA program and tracks its progress or status.
- Observe a Firewise Communities/USA Day annually, dedicated to a local Firewise project.

- Invest a minimum of \$2.00 per capita annually in local Firewise projects. (Work by municipal employees or volunteers using municipal and other equipment can be included, as can state/federal grants dedicated to that purpose.)
- Submit an annual report to Firewise Communities/USA that documents continuing compliance with the program.

Communities interested in earning recognition may visit www.firewise.org/usa for more information.

Firewise Communities/USA is a part of the National Firewise Communities Program, an interagency program designed to encourage local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters, and others in the effort to protect people and property from the risk of wildfire. The National Firewise Communities Program includes Firewise Communities workshops, Firewise Communities/USA recognition program, and support for fire organizations and community groups. The National Firewise Communities Program is sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team, a consortium of wildland fire agencies that includes the USDA Forest Service, the Department of the Interior, the National Association of State Foresters, the US Fire Administration, and the National Fire Protection Association. For more information, visit www.firewise.org.

###